

Student Visa Responsibilities Handbook 2024-25

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DISCLAIMER

This document has been created in order to provide Aberystwyth University students with an overview of their Student Visa responsibilities. The guidance in this document applies to students holding Student Visas and those holding Tier 4 visas. Tier 4 terminology was replaced with Student Visa from October 2020.

This document should not be considered as a FULL representation of the legal requirements concerning compliance with the student visa regulations and/or relied upon in a specific student's case.

Student visas are the responsibility of the visa holder. Aberystwyth University will not be held responsible for a student's lack of compliance with the regulations set out by UK Visas and Immigration.

Please note that the following information is correct at the time of publishing and Aberystwyth University reserves the right to revise its policies and procedures concerning compliance with its Home Office sponsor duties at any point during the academic year. Aberystwyth University will not be held responsible for any omission or for any loss or damage arising from the use of this handbook.

Please ensure you access the most up to date copy of the Student Visa Responsibilities Handbook throughout your studies at Aberystwyth University by visiting <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/compliance-information/>. It is your responsibility to ensure that you fully understand the immigration rules and monitor any changes to legislation and immigration rules while you are in the UK. Please note that the Home Office may revise their policies and that immigration law is subject to change.

1. INTRODUCTION

Aberystwyth University is recognised as a 'sponsor' under the Points Based System and must comply with its sponsorship duties as specified by UK Visas & Immigration. If Aberystwyth University fails to comply then it could lose its license to recruit and sponsor international students.

As a visa holder you have responsibilities which you must take seriously. If you do not take your responsibilities seriously, this could lead to Aberystwyth University reporting you to UK Visas & Immigration which would have implications for your visa.

This handbook explains the reporting and record-keeping responsibilities of Aberystwyth University as your immigration sponsor under the Points Based System. It also states the responsibilities of students holding a Student Visa based on regulations set out by the Home Office. Student Visa holders must comply with these regulations to protect their immigration status and their right to legally remain in the UK as a student.

By enrolling at Aberystwyth University, you agree to comply with the responsibilities listed in this document. Failure to comply with any of the responsibilities mentioned in this booklet may affect your visa status and your right to study in the UK.

You are also advised to access the advice provided by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) regarding the protection of your visa status at www.ukcisa.org.uk/.

Changes to your student status are reported to the Home Office using your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number through the UK Visas & Immigration Sponsorship Management System (SMS).

You must respond to any emails sent to you by the University promptly and especially to any emails relating to your visa.

2. BEFORE REGISTRATION

Aberystwyth University is required to keep:

- a copy of your entry vignette (if applicable)
- a copy of your current passport
- a copy of your current visa (Biometric Residence Permit BRP or eVisa)
- copies of any previous visas in the UK (if applicable)
- copies of academic transcripts / certificates (if applicable)
- copy of English Language proficiency (if applicable)
- copy of ATAS certificate (if applicable)

Your responsibility:

2.1. New Students

As a new student of Aberystwyth University, you will be required to attend an International Students Pre-enrolment Document Check taking place at the beginning of the academic year prior to registration.

International Students Pre-Enrolment Check

The UKVI Compliance Office will send you details of how to book an appointment for a Pre-Enrolment Check. These sessions are compulsory and every student holding a Student Visa must attend. You will need to bring the following documents with you:

- your current passport
- your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) (if applicable)
- academic transcripts / certificates (if applicable)
- copy of English Language proficiency (if applicable)
- copy of ATAS certificate (if applicable)
- Students NOT in university accommodation need to bring proof of address in the form of a signed contract with a private provider

You should make every effort to arrive in Aberystwyth by the course start date (see website for details on [dates of term](#)).

Early / late arrivals

If you are going to arrive after your course start date you must inform the UKVI Compliance Office as soon as possible.

If you have not arrived in time to meet the latest registration date noted on your CAS, we have a responsibility to inform the Home Office and to withdraw sponsorship of your visa. Your visa will be cancelled. If you are not in the UK, you will not be able to

travel to and enter the UK. If you are in the UK, you must leave immediately to return to your Home Country so as not to become an overstayer. Overstaying will have serious consequences for any future immigration applications that you make, including applications for countries other than the UK. For further advice on overstaying please see UKCISA's website: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Protecting-your-Student-status>

2.2. Returning Students

If you are a returning student who has not yet provided a copy of your updated passport and/or visa, you will not be able to register for the continuation of your course until you have provided the required documents.

Failure to show any requested documents will prevent you from continuing with your course and you will only be allowed to return to your studies once you can present the appropriate immigration documents that show that you have a legal right to stay and study in the UK.

3. CENSUS

Aberystwyth University holds a Census event each academic year. These are compulsory events.

All non-first year Student Visa holders will be required to attend a census event in semester 2.

The UKVI Compliance Office will email you with details about the Census event if you are required to attend.

Additional Census events may be held at other times of year for different groups of Student Visa holders. You will be sent details in good time if you are required to attend.

You will need to bring the following documents with you to the Census event:

- AU Student Card
- current Passport,
- current Student Visa / BRP (if you have an eVisa, you will not have this)

You will also be asked to confirm your current term-time address and other contact details.

4. UPDATING CONTACT DETAILS

Aberystwyth University is required to keep up to date contact details for you. You must ensure that your contact details are up to date on your Student Record.

Your responsibility:

4.1. Updating the University

You must ensure that the contact details held on your Student Record are up to date. You must record on your Student Record a valid Home Address, Home telephone number, your current Term address and UK mobile/phone number.

What is a Home address?

Your Home address is the address at which you are staying in your Home Country. A Home address cannot be an address based in the UK if you hold a Student Visa.

What is a Term address?

Your Term address is the address at which you are currently staying while studying at Aberystwyth University. A Term address must be an address in Aberystwyth or within a 1-hour commutable distance from Aberystwyth. If in doubt, please contact compliance@aber.ac.uk.

You should inform the University of any changes to your contact details by updating your Student Record as soon as the change occurs. You will also be asked to confirm up-to-date details during a Census event.

The UKVI Compliance Office is automatically informed of any changes you make to your Student Record. If there are any issues with the details you provide on your Student Record, you may be contacted to provide clarification.

4.2. Updating the Home Office

You are required to inform the Home Office of any changes to your contact details during your studies. This includes your phone number, email address and your temporary address if you are likely to stay there for more than six months.

You must also report changes to your personal details or circumstances in order for your right to remain and study in the UK to be protected.

Please note that the way in which you will need to update the Home Office varies depending on whether you would like to do so from outside the UK, whether you are in the UK and hold a valid BRP or whether you are in the UK but do not have a BRP.

For more information, please visit www.gov.uk/change-circumstances-visa-brp.

If you lose your BRP or if your BRP is stolen, you must inform the Home Office as soon as possible. If your lost or stolen BRP was about to expire, you must apply for a replacement. (<https://www.gov.uk/replace-brp>). The International Student Adviser (immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk) can assist you with this.

5. UPDATING IMMIGRATION STATUS

Aberystwyth University is required to keep up to date evidence of your immigration status including a copy of your UK Biometric card or eVisa.

Your responsibility:

If you extend your visa in the UK, you will receive a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) or an eVisa from the Home Office. You must present your BRP / eVisa to either the International Student Adviser or the UKVI Compliance Office so that your Student Record can be updated accordingly.

Failure to provide up to date evidence of your entitlement to remain and study in the UK will put the continuation of your studies at risk.

If, during your studies at Aberystwyth University, you need to apply for a new passport or for a visa extension, it is your responsibility to do so in a timely manner and before the expiry date.

If your passport and/or visa is due to expire you will receive e-mail notifications from the University's International Student Adviser. The email notification will ask you to present your new passport and/or make provision to apply for a visa extension well before your visa expires. Please treat such e-mails as very important and urgent and reply to them immediately.

Please note that it is your responsibility to inform Aberystwyth University's UKVI Compliance Office (compliance@aber.ac.uk) of any change to your immigration status.

The International Student Adviser is also able to provide you with advice and information and you are welcome to contact them at immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk.

Transition to eVisas

The University is required to hold up-to-date copies of a student's visa. The UKVI is currently in the process of transitioning from Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs) to eVisas.

It is anticipated that all Student Visa BRPs will have transitioned to eVisas by January 2025. All students whose BRP expires before then will need obtain a copy of their eVisa/send the University a share code so that a copy of their eVisa can be accessed. Details on how and when to do this will be sent to you.

6. CHANGE OF IMMIGRATION CATEGORY

Aberystwyth University is required to report to the Home Office any changes to your immigration category and update your student record accordingly.

Following changes by the Home Office which came into effect from 17 July 2023, Student Visa holders will no longer be able to switch out of the student route until they have completed their course, except for PhD students who are permitted to switch into the Skilled Worker route after they have completed 24 months towards their PhD.

Your responsibility:

If you have changed immigration category, you must inform the UKVI Compliance Office by e-mailing compliance@aber.ac.uk. You will need to present original proof of the change, by bringing your new visa / other immigration documentation to the UKVI Compliance Office.

If your circumstances change and you are no longer subject to immigration control, you must inform the UKVI Compliance Office immediately and provide proof of your new status.

If you have questions about changing immigration status, please contact the International Student Advisor at immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk.

7. ATAS CERTIFICATE

Aberystwyth University is required to keep a copy of your Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate where applicable.

What is an ATAS certificate?

It is a compulsory entry clearance requirement for those wishing to study as Postgraduate students towards a PhD or a Master's degree in certain subjects. For further information on the scheme and the subjects that require an ATAS certificate please see www.gov.uk/academictechnology-approval-scheme

Your responsibility:

You are required to check whether you need an ATAS certificate. After receiving an ATAS Certificate from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, you must submit a copy to the UKVI Compliance Office by e-mailing compliance@aber.ac.uk.

If you are changing course and are not sure whether you need an ATAS certificate for your new course, please contact immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk for further guidance.

8. FAILURE TO ENROL, RE-REGISTER OR CONTINUE WITH STUDIES

Aberystwyth University is required to inform the Home Office of any student, who failed to enrol on their course within 10 days of the latest registration date.

Your responsibility:

8.1 Permanent Withdrawal: When you no longer wish to continue studying at AU

If you have decided not to continue your degree at Aberystwyth University, you will need to complete an online 'Notification of Withdrawal' form. This can be found on your Student Record under the title 'Academic Record'.

Please ensure that before making the final decision about discontinuing your studies and **before** completing the online 'Notification of Withdrawal' form you have contacted your academic department and the International Student Adviser

(immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk) so that you can receive advice about the implications for your visa of a possible withdrawal.

Once you have submitted the online 'Notification of Withdrawal' form you have 3 days to cancel your withdrawal request. After that period, once your withdrawal request has been processed by Academic Registry, we will inform the Home Office and withdraw sponsorship. The Home Office will curtail your visa and, as you will no longer have the right to remain and study in the UK, you must leave the UK. If you fail to do so, you could risk becoming an overstayer. Overstaying is a criminal offence and can have serious implications for any future immigration applications you make in the UK and in other countries.

If you have decided to study (transfer) or work elsewhere in the UK, you will need to provide us with details of your new university or employer.

We are required by the UKVI to report a change in immigration category or a change to another visa sponsor (university).

8.2 Temporary Withdrawal: You wish to have a break from your course

If you decide to take a break from your studies but want to return to complete your course at Aberystwyth University at a later date you will need to complete the online 'Notification of Withdrawal' form requesting a Temporary Withdrawal. This can be found on your Student Record under the title 'Academic Record'.

Before making the final decision and **before** completing the online 'Notification of Withdrawal' form you should contact your academic department and the International Student Adviser(immigrationadvice@aber.c.uk) so that you can receive advice about the visa implications of a possible withdrawal.

Once you have submitted the online 'Notification of Withdrawal' form you have 3 days to cancel your withdrawal request. After that period, once your withdrawal has been processed by central registry, we will inform the Home Office and withdraw sponsorship. The Home Office will curtail your visa and, as you will no longer have the right to remain and study in the UK, you must leave the UK. If you fail to do so, you could risk becoming an overstayer. Overstaying is a criminal offence and can have serious implications for any future immigration applications you make in the UK and in other countries. If you are not in the UK when you decide to temporarily withdraw, please note that you will not be able to enter the UK.

When you decide to return to your studies you will need to apply for a new Student Visa and you will need a new Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS).

Please contact the International Student Adviser (immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk) at least 3 months prior to returning to your studies.

8.3 Failing your coursework / exams

If you are not able to progress on your course, the University is required to inform the Home Office and withdraw its sponsorship, as your course will have finished earlier than planned. Once this has been reported to the Home Office, your visa will be cancelled, you will have to

return to your Home Country. If you have decided to transfer to another university in the UK, you will need to provide details to the UKVI Compliance Office as this can impact on your right to remain in the UK.

It is very important that you submit coursework and attend your exams as this can affect your academic progress. You must inform your department (please see the list of the Departmental Compliance Contacts on the compliance web pages here) immediately if you are unable to meet a coursework deadline or attend an exam.

8.4 Arriving late

If you are going to arrive late when you start your course, or following a vacation period, you must inform the UKVI Compliance Office as soon as possible. If the delay is caused by a genuine reason, the University will inform the Home Office of the circumstances.

If you fail to enrol on your course at Aberystwyth University, we have a responsibility to inform the Home Office and to withdraw sponsorship of your visa. Your visa will be cancelled. If you are not in the UK, you will not be able to travel to and enter the UK. If you are in the UK, you must leave immediately to return to your Home Country so as not to become an overstayer. Overstaying will have serious consequences for any future immigration applications that you make, including applications for countries other than the UK. For further advice on overstaying please see UKCISA's website:

<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Protecting-your-Student-status>

9. CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Aberystwyth University must report changes to a student's circumstances within 10 days of the circumstance being confirmed.

Changes we are required to report and what you need to do are listed below.

9.1. Change of study location

If you are planning to change the location of your study, you must inform the UKVI Compliance Office immediately.

Here are some examples of changes of study location:

9.1.1. Writing up from Home (PGT)

If you would like to write up your Master's dissertation from your home country you will need to request approval from your department. Your department will only approve the request if you have attended all required teaching sessions, have completed all required laboratory work and have discussed with your supervisor how supervision can be delivered remotely. If approval is given, you will need to inform the UKVI Compliance Office. The University will withdraw sponsorship and your visa will be cancelled. Although your visa will be cancelled, you will remain a student until the end of your registration.

You will not be able to return to the UK on your Student Visa once sponsorship has been withdrawn.

It is important that you understand that in choosing to end your visa early you will not be eligible for the Graduate Route visa after you complete your course. This is because a key condition for eligibility is that a student holds a valid/current Student Visa with time remaining on the permission. You should consider this in your decision making.

You should check the terms of any loan / scholarship you may be in receipt of to ensure you comply with those conditions. If you are a student from the USA in receipt of a US Federal Loan you should notify usloans@aber.ac.uk.

9.1.2 Exchange Programme or Study Abroad

If you are interested in participating in an Exchange programme or Study abroad for a period of time during your studies, you will need to contact the UKVI Compliance Office to discuss the implications for your visa. The University will report the location and duration of your exchange to the Home Office.

To satisfy engagement monitoring requirements, you will need to obtain signatures each month from a relevant contact at the partner institution. For further details please see the University's Student Visa Holders Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy.

9.1.3. PGR students - Writing up from home or conducting research abroad

Postgraduate Research Students who have agreed with their supervisor to write up from home or conduct research abroad must inform the UKVI Compliance Office immediately and prior to departure.

If you are writing up from home, the University will report this to the Home Office and withdraw sponsorship. Your visa will be cancelled and if you need to re-enter the country e. g. for your PhD viva voce, you will need to enter the UK on a Visit Visa. Please note that you can only return home to write up when you are in your 'Abeyance' / 'Writing Up' period.

It is important that you understand that in choosing to end your visa early you will not be eligible for the Graduate Route visa after you complete your course. This is because a key condition for eligibility is that a student holds a valid/current Student Visa with time remaining on the permission. You should consider this in your decision making.

If you are conducting research abroad, withdrawing sponsorship will depend on the duration of that research and you can discuss this more with the UKVI Compliance Office.

If the length of the research duration demands the withdrawal of sponsorship, your visa will be cancelled, and you will need to apply for a new visa in order to continue your studies based at Aberystwyth University.

In each of the above cases it is your responsibility to amend your contact details via your Student Record and to inform the UKVI Compliance Office of the address of the new study location.

9.1.4. Undertaking fieldwork for PGR students

The University must inform the Home Office within 10 days of a student leaving to undertake fieldwork. This is recorded as 'Change of Study Location' and does not impact on the student's visa.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the UKVI Compliance Office is aware of your plans to undertake fieldwork and is informed prior to the fieldwork taking place. Whilst undertaking fieldwork you must maintain e-mail contact with your AU supervisor to discuss the work undertaken and to provide any available evidence of such work. Please see the University's Student Visa Holders Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy for further information.

9.2 Work Placement

If you undertake a work placement as part of your course, the Home Office will need to know the location and duration of that placement. The University remains responsible for you whilst you are on the work placement.

If you undertake a work placement that has been approved by the University and is connected to your studies, you must provide the following information by emailing compliance@aber.ac.uk before your placement starts. The University is required to pass this information to the Home Office:

- Name of the organisation offering the work placement;
- Address of the organisation;
- Reason why the work placement is a necessary part of your studies;
- Start and end date of the work placement.

It is your responsibility to make all the necessary arrangements for obtaining clearance to enter the country of the work placement, but you are welcome to contact the International Student Adviser (immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk) for advice.

It is also your responsibility to collect evidence from your employer that you are attending your placement. You must obtain the signature of your employer once a month. The signature must be recorded on the Attendance Monitoring Form that the UKVI Compliance Office will provide. Please see the University's Student Visa Holders Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy for further information.

9.3. Change of course of study

If you are interested in transferring to another course at Aberystwyth University, you will need to obtain approval from your current department (and from your new department if you are transferring between two different departments). You must also discuss the possible

change of course with the International Student Adviser prior to making a formal decision as changes may have an impact on your visa.

Once the transfer has been approved by the University, the Home Office will be informed of the change. You must ensure that you inform the UKVI Compliance Office that you are transferring to another course.

9.4. Finishing a course earlier than expected

The University is obliged to tell the Home Office if you complete your course earlier than expected.

For example, if you are a PhD student who is awarded their PhD earlier than the course end date stated on your last CAS, the University must inform the Home Office of the actual date that you completed your PhD.

Once the early completion has been reported to the Home Office, your visa will no longer be valid, and you must either leave the UK or make a new visa application with the Home Office to change your purpose of stay in the UK.

9.5. Re-sit Exams

There are two types of re-sits as follows:

9.5.1. Internal Resit

In some cases, the University will recommend that you re-sit a year of study “in attendance”. The University will expect you to re-register to repeat a whole year of study. In this case, you will need to extend your visa for another year, due to the repeat year. Please be aware that the Home Office has set a limit of 5 years on the amount of time that can be spent studying in the UK at degree level. Students with more than one re-sit year may be affected by this time cap. Further information on the time limits can be found on UKCISA’s Time Limit (Cap) on Study at <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk>.

9.5.2. External Resit

In other cases, the University will require you to be withdrawn from study due to failed exams, which means that you cannot progress to the next level of the course until you have re-taken the re-sit exams. You will be required to leave the UK; the University will report the change of circumstances to the Home Office and will withdraw sponsorship. The report to the Home Office will result in curtailment of your visa. When you have successfully completed your resit(s) and are ready to return to Aberystwyth University to continue with your course, you will need to apply for a new visa with a new CAS.

If you need to return to the UK to re-sit your exams, you will need to do this on a Visit Visa. You will need to contact the UKVI Compliance Office before traveling to Aberystwyth University to re-sit your exams.

10. VISA REFUSALS

Aberystwyth University must report any visa refusals to the Home Office within 10 days of being made aware of the refusal.

Your responsibility:

You must inform the UKVI Compliance Office immediately of any visa refusal notification you have received from the Home Office by e-mailing compliance@aber.ac.uk. You must include all pages of the refusal notice you have received from the Home Office in the format of a PDF document. If you need advice following the visa refusal, please contact the International Student Adviser by e-mailing immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk.

11. ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE MONITORING

In accordance with Home Office policy, Aberystwyth University is required to monitor the engagement and attendance of Student Visa students on a regular basis. Full details are provided in the **Student Visa Holders Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy**. This policy is available on the Student Visa Compliance webpages.

You should read the Student Visa Holders Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy in full and ensure that you understand how engagement with your course of study will be monitored and the escalation process that will be followed if you do not meet the minimum engagement requirements.

You should note that failure to meet the minimum engagement requirements set out within the Student Visa Holders Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy will result in withdrawal of sponsorship of your Student Visa and exclusion from your course.

12. AUTHORISED ABSENCE

The University is required to monitor engagement and attendance during term time (<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/about-us/dates-of-term/#term-dates-for-session--->).

You must request authorised absence if you are going to be absent outside of recognised vacation periods

PLEASE NOTE: Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students (during the teaching period) need to request authorised absence if the proposed absence will mean that they will be missing classes or examinations/assessments. Students who have attended all teaching and assessments for the year do not need permission to return home at the conclusion of the session. Authorised absence is required if UG/PGT students will be missing contact points.

Please ensure that authorised absence requests have been submitted and approved before finalising your travel arrangements.

Unauthorised absences will count as missed contact points and could lead to your exclusion from the University and the curtailment of your visa. **Retrospective permission will not normally be granted.**

This process safeguards you and your visa as you will be able to prove to border officials that you have permission to be away from the University during term time.

12.1 Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students

AUTHORISED ABSENCE PROCESS for Postgraduate Research (PGR) students	
STEP 1	Student to contact their Academic supervisor requesting Authorised Absence by stating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Where they are going b) How long for c) Why
STEP 2	Academic Supervisor to assess request and if happy to authorise the absence they must state in writing (by e-mail) that “they approve the absence, and that this absence will not impact on the student’s current latest submission date”. The student will then need to forward the approved request to the UKVI Compliance Office.
STEP 3	UKVI Compliance Office to assess and authorise the request and produce a letter to be used by the student when travelling abroad.

12.2 Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Undergraduate (UG) Students

AUTHORISED ABSENCE PROCESS for Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Undergraduate (UG) students	
STEP 1	Student to contact their Departmental Compliance Contact requesting Authorised Absence and for the purpose of travelling the student must state: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Where they are going b) How long for c) Why
STEP 2	Departmental Compliance Contact will forward the request to the relevant member of staff to seek approval in writing.
STEP 3	Departmental Compliance Contact will forward approval of the Authorised Absence request to the UKVI Compliance Office (compliance@aber.ac.uk)
STEP 4	UKVI Compliance Office to assess and authorise the request and produce a letter to be used by the student when travelling abroad. The UKVI Compliance Office will ensure that the student’s attendance (SAMS) record is updated to reflect the period of Authorised Absence.

13. WORKING WHILE STUDYING

Your visa - either the passport sticker (entry clearance or residence permit) or your biometric residence permit (identity card) or your eVisa - will state whether you have the right to work while you are in the UK.

Further information is available on UKCISA's website via the following link:

<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Student-work>

Employers have a legal obligation to check that you are allowed to work in the UK, and you must be able to provide evidence of this by showing your visa. You must also provide your employer with information regarding term and vacation dates for your course in order for them to know when you can work part-time (term-time) or full-time (vacation period). This information must be in one of the following formats:

- A printout from the University's website showing the term and vacation dates for your course (this information can be found at www.aber.ac.uk/en/dates-of-term/);
- A letter or e-mail from the University confirming your term and vacation dates (please request this from the International Student Adviser at immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk);

Home Office guidance on the checks that employers must make and where they should go to check a person's entitlement to work is available online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-working-penalties-codes-of-practice-for-employers>

13.1. Undergraduate Students

As an undergraduate student (studying at degree level or above) studying on a Student Visa, you are allowed to work part-time (a maximum of 20 hours per week) during term time provided that it is stated on your visa. You can work full-time during vacation periods.

Vacation periods for undergraduate students at Aberystwyth University are:

Study Level	Excluded Period
Pre-Sessional English Course	None
International Foundation Programme (Pre-Masters)	Christmas Vacation, Easter Vacation
Undergraduate	Christmas Vacation, Easter Vacation, Summer Vacation

13.2. Postgraduate Students

If you are studying towards a Postgraduate Taught course (Master), you can work a maximum of 20 hours per week during term time provided that it is stated on your visa. You can work full time during vacation periods.

Please note that when you are working on your dissertation this is not vacation period for you as you are studying full-time. During those months, you are limited to working part-time as stated on your visa until you have submitted your dissertation and no longer have any pending academic commitments.

Vacation periods for postgraduate students at Aberystwyth University are:

Study Level	Excluded Period
Postgraduate Taught	Christmas Vacation, Easter Vacation
Postgraduate Research	PGR students must be studying in Aberystwyth for 44 weeks per academic year. Vacation must be taken when appropriate in line with your research and any teaching events.

Postgraduate Research students must be studying in Aberystwyth for 44 weeks per academic year. Vacation must be taken when appropriate in line with your research and any teaching events.

If you are a Postgraduate Research student, you must be studying at Aberystwyth University and be based in Aberystwyth for 44 weeks per academic year.

Any vacation must be taken when appropriate in line with your research and any teaching events. You will need to seek approval for your period of vacation in line with the Authorised Absence process.

You are permitted to work up to 20 hours per week during term-time provided that this is stated on your visa. You should not assume that you can work full-time during summertime or any other time of the year where there are no specific teaching activities.

14. NON-GENUINE STUDENTS

Unfortunately, each year we receive reports from UKVI of people using the student route to enter the UK with no intention to study. The University is required to report any cases of non-genuine students to the Home Office.

Where there are concerns that a Student Visa holder is not a genuine student, we will arrange a meeting with the student and may ask for additional supporting evidence that shows they are genuine. This may include, but is not limited to:

- proof of address,
- payment of fees,
- statements from personal tutors/academic department,
- proof of use for halls of residence
- academic engagement such as attendance, submission of work and use of online course materials

- attendance records.

Where the UKVI Compliance Office is not satisfied that a Student Visa holder is a genuine student, their case will be escalated to the University's Executive Lead for UKVI Compliance (UKVI Sponsor Authorising Officer) with a case for withdrawal of Student Visa sponsorship.

The Executive Lead for UKVI Compliance will review the case in consultation with the UKVI Compliance Office and where they find that concerns about the student's genuineness are justified, they will formally approve the withdrawal of Student Visa sponsorship. This action will result in the student being permanently excluded from their course. The exclusion will be confirmed by the University's Academic Registrar.

A formal exclusion letter will be issued to the student. Sponsorship of their Student Visa will be withdrawn, and they will be required to leave the UK.

In line with section 7.5.j. of the UKVI's Student Sponsor Guidance, Document 2: Sponsorship Duties the University will also report to the Home Office that it suspects that the student is not a genuine student via the following link: [Report an immigration or border crime - GOV.UK.](#)

14.1 Right of Review

If a student wished to appeal against the formal outcome of a case considered in line with this Policy, they can request a Review, to be investigated by a member of the University Executive (or nominee), on the following grounds:

- Defects or irregularities in the procedure followed when reaching the original outcome, which are of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the same decision would have been reached had they not occurred. Evidence of procedural irregularity must be submitted with the request for review.
- New evidence which the student was unable to provide earlier in the process, for valid reasons, and its absence would have materially affected the outcome. New evidence must be submitted with the request for review, and the student must show good reason why the evidence was not introduced earlier in the procedure, prior to the Right of Review stage.

The request for a Review must be submitted within 5 working days of the date of the letter that informed the student of the outcome of the formal decision. The request for a Review must include appropriate supporting evidence to substantiate the issues addressed.

On receipt of a Right of Review request, the UKVI Compliance Manager will forward the original under-engagement case as well as the Right of Review request and the additional evidence provided as part of the Right of Review request on to the member of the University Executive (or nominee).

The Right of Review process will normally be concluded within 10 working days of the date that the Right of Review is requested.

The member of the University Executive (or nominee) will consider the case and will either:

Dismiss the request for review and uphold the original decision

or

Uphold the request for review, in whole or in part, and recommend appropriate action to be taken based on the circumstances of the case.

The decision of the member of the University Executive (or nominee) is final, and the matter shall therefore be regarded as closed. Upon completion of the Right of Review process, the student will be issued with a formal outcome letter.

15. GRADUATE ROUTE AND COMPLETING YOUR COURSE

On 1 July 2021 the Home Office launched a new Graduate Route Visa.

If you successfully complete your course and pass initial eligibility requirements, you may be able to apply for the Graduate Route Visa. If you are eligible for this visa the University is required to report this to the UKVI, even if you do not intend to apply.

On successful completion of your course the UKVI Compliance Office will inform you when your eligibility has been assessed and whether the Home Office has been informed.

You can only apply for this route if you do not intend to study another course in the UK.

If you are an undergraduate student who has completed your course of study, you may receive a notification that you are eligible for the graduate route. However, if you intend to study a postgraduate course in the UK you should apply for a new Student Visa.

More details about the Graduate Route Visa are available here:

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/sscs/visa-support-advice/post-study/graduate-route/>

16. USEFUL INFORMATION

Please contact the UKVI Compliance Office at compliance@aber.ac.uk for more information and/or clarification regarding your responsibilities whilst studying at Aberystwyth University.

Please contact the International Student Adviser at immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk for any visa advice and support. The International Student Adviser can also help you with your visa application, help you if your visa is not granted and also help you if you lose your passport or Biometric Residence Permit.

The following weblink provides that names and contact details of each Departmental Compliance Contact: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/compliance-information/departmental-compliance-contacts/>

Recognised Vacation Period For AU Students

The Home Office does not require universities to monitor engagement or attendance during recognised vacation periods. These vary by course type and you should check the University Term Dates webpage for details for your course.

Here are Aberystwyth University's recognised vacation periods:

Study Level	Vacation Period
Pre-Sessional English Course	None
International Foundation Programme (Pre-Masters)	Christmas Vacation, Easter Vacation
Undergraduate	Christmas Vacation, Easter Vacation, Summer Vacation
Postgraduate Taught	Christmas Vacation, Easter Vacation
Postgraduate Research	PGR students must be studying in Aberystwyth for 44 weeks per academic year. Vacation must be taken when appropriate in line with their research and any teaching events.

Student Visa Holders Engagement & Attendance Monitoring Policy

This policy is available on the Student Visa Compliance webpage:

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/compliance-information/>

You will be asked to enter your AU username and password to access the document.

17. USEFUL EXTERNAL INFORMATION

Eligibility and Requirements for Student or Visitor Visas

For information about the eligibility requirements please refer to the Home Office website at

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/student-visas>

Public Funds

For information about Public Funds please refer to the Home Office website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-funds--2>

Caseworker Guidance for Home Office staff assessing Student Visa applications.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route>

UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) www.ukcisa.org.uk

Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)

For information about the Regulated Qualifications Framework please refer to the Ofqual website at: <https://www.gov.uk/find-a-regulated-qualification>